The WisDOT Connector
Informing Wisconsin on key transportation issues
Vol. 5 No. 1
Spring 2002

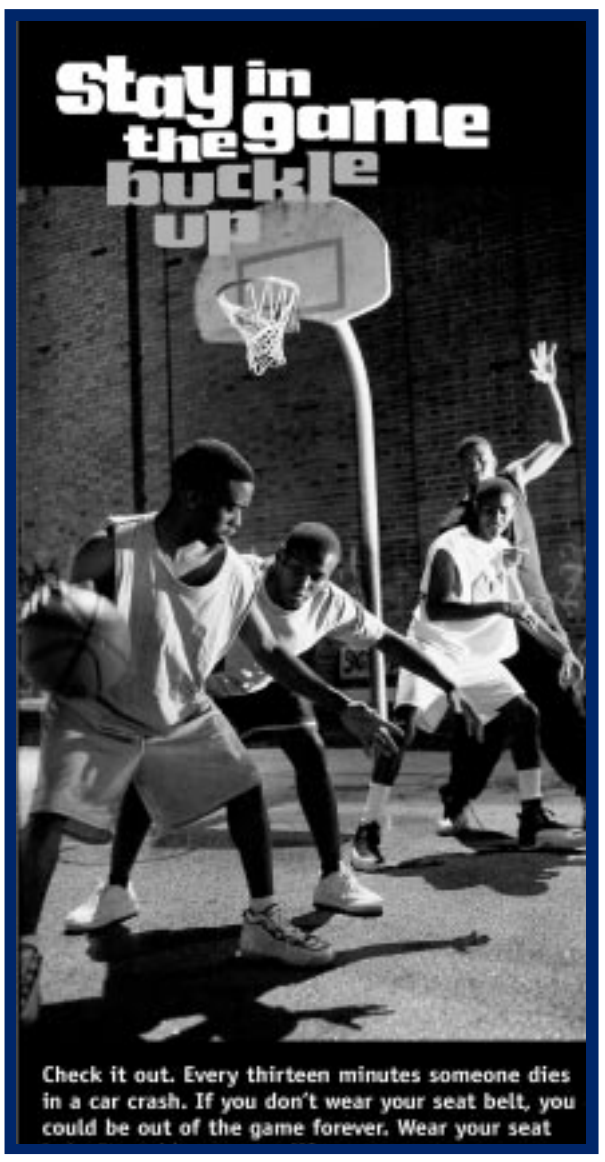
More than 30% still not getting seat belt message in Wisconsin

The latest WisDOT observational survey of seat belt use in Wisconsin indicates we still have work to do in getting people to buckle up. In 2001, 68.7% of motorists and passengers wore seat belts in Wisconsin. That means more than 30% of the people are still *unbuckled*. Traffic crashes killed 764 people in Wisconsin last year. Nearly two-thirds of those who died in cars and light trucks were *not* wearing a seat belt.

Seat belts may be the single most effective line of defense in a traffic crash, so a renewed effort is underway to urge people to buckle up. The hope is to get folks to think, *"the captain has just turned on the fasten seat belts sign,"* each time they travel the roads.

Why? Seat belts are the law in Wisconsin. You're required to wear a safety belt whenever you travel in a motor vehicle. More than 90,000 seat belt citations were issued last year in Wisconsin. And seat belts save lives. In most cases, wearing a seat belt often means walking away from a crash. For those *not* wearing a seat belt who somehow survive, the injuries are likely to be grave. Being jettisoned into the windshield, or thrown from the vehicle can leave you disfigured, injured internally or paralyzed.

WisDOT has been running these ads, targeted at motorists who don't wear a seat belt, in newspapers throughout Wisconsin.



Latest survey: good news / bad news

Safety belt use is slowly rising in Wisconsin, but it could be better. Our current 68.7% seat belt use is up slightly from the previous survey, which found 65.4% usage. Despite the increase, Wisconsin remains below the national average of 73%.

For people 16-25 years old, seat belt use is very low. Barely half are buckling up. Occupants of pickup trucks are least likely of all to use seat belts - fewer than half. And generally speaking, men are less likely than women to use their seat belts.

A grant from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is helping WisDOT win over the unbuckled in 2002. A major campaign is underway as part of the *Click It, Why Risk It* program. The grant is supporting law enforcement efforts on the state and local levels to boost safety belt use. The funding is also helping to produce television, radio and newspaper ads.

Primary or secondary?

Wisconsin has a secondary enforcement seat belt law. That means if a law enforcement officer pulls you over for another violation, you can also be cited for not wearing a seat belt. In states that have a primary law, the seat belt violation can be the only reason for getting pulled over.

A primary enforcement law is not on the immediate agenda in Wisconsin. But there have been recent attempts to pass one, and the issue is likely to arise again. Research has shown that for those 30% who still don't wear their seat belts, fear of getting a ticket may be the only way to get them to buckle up.

"Seat belts" continued on page 6

TRANSPORTATION NEWS IN BRIEF

.08 law on the horizon

In April, Governor Scott McCallum directed the Department of Transportation to begin building the consensus needed to help make .08 BAC (blood alcohol concentration) the legal limit for an Operating While Intoxicated (OWI) first offense in Wisconsin.

Last year, drunk driving crashes killed 304 people in Wisconsin and caused 1,319 incapacitating injuries. WisDOT welcomes any effort to help reduce those numbers. Lowering the legal alcohol limit from the current .10 BAC to a limit of .08 would provide another tool to address the problem of alcohol impaired driving in Wisconsin.

Wisconsin already has one of the most aggressive impaired driving programs in the nation. Wisconsin law currently has a .08 limit for a third OWI offense. For fourth and subsequent OWI offenses, the standard is more stringent: any level "more than .02." For other alcohol-related offenses, for commercial drivers and drivers under the age of 21, the legal standard is absolute sobriety.

Tough on repeat offenders

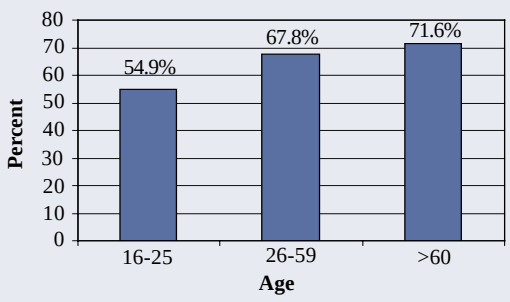
OWI laws in Wisconsin also provide a structure of increasing penalties for repeat offenders and for those with high blood alcohol levels, or those with a minor child in the vehicle. And unlike Illinois, for instance, Wisconsin prohibits deferred prosecution for impaired driving violations (resulting in our nearly 92% conviction rate for those arrested and prosecuted for OWI).

Enactment of a .08 law by October 1, 2003, would meet federal requirements and would protect federal highway construction funds coming to Wisconsin. Those funds will be withheld from states not in compliance by that date. (See related story on page 2)

Young drivers buckle up least

WisDOT's latest statewide survey finds that seat belt use is the lowest among young drivers (ages 16-25). Barely more than half of this age group (54.9%) buckled up in 2001. Young drivers account for about 16% of the licensed drivers in Wisconsin, but make up about a third of the drivers involved in crashes.

WI seat belt use by age of drivers



See page 6 for more seat belt statistics

DRUNK DRIVING LAW: 2003 deadline puts emphasis on financial costs of not passing .08

Next year, Wisconsin lawmakers face a dilemma: pass a law setting a new lower limit for an OWI first offense or begin losing federal highway construction dollars.

There's much debate about whether lowering the legal limit from .10 to .08 would result in safer roadways and fewer drunk driving fatalities. But the decision for Wisconsin may come down to the financial impact of *not* lowering the limit. Through 2008, that impact could be as high as $142 million.

Financial impact for Wisconsin

The U.S. DOT's 2001 Appropriation Act (HR 4475) requires each state to lower its legal drunk driving limit for a first offense to .08 BAC (blood alcohol concentration) by September 30, 2003, in order to receive the full share of federal highway funds.

Failure to pass a .08 law would subject Wisconsin to an annually increasing series of withholdings in federal highway construction funds, starting with a $9.1 million penalty in 2004. Withholdings will be returned if Wisconsin passes a .08 law within four years of the withholding.

For example, if a .08 law were to pass in FY 2007, withholdings from 2004-2007 would be returned. But if the law were to pass in 2008, the withholdings for FY 2005-2008 would be returned, and the withholding for 2004 would be permanently lost.

Beginning in FY 2004, Wisconsin would lose 2% of federal highway funding, with the penalty increasing by two percentage points a year - until it reaches an 8% cap in FY 2007. The 8% reduction in federal funding continues each year thereafter.

Potential withholdings (2004-2008)

2004 penalty - 2%:	$ 9,100,000
2005 penalty - 4%:	$17,500,000
2006 penalty - 6%:	$26,200,000
2007 penalty - 8%:	$35,300,000
2008 penalty - 8%:	$36,000,000

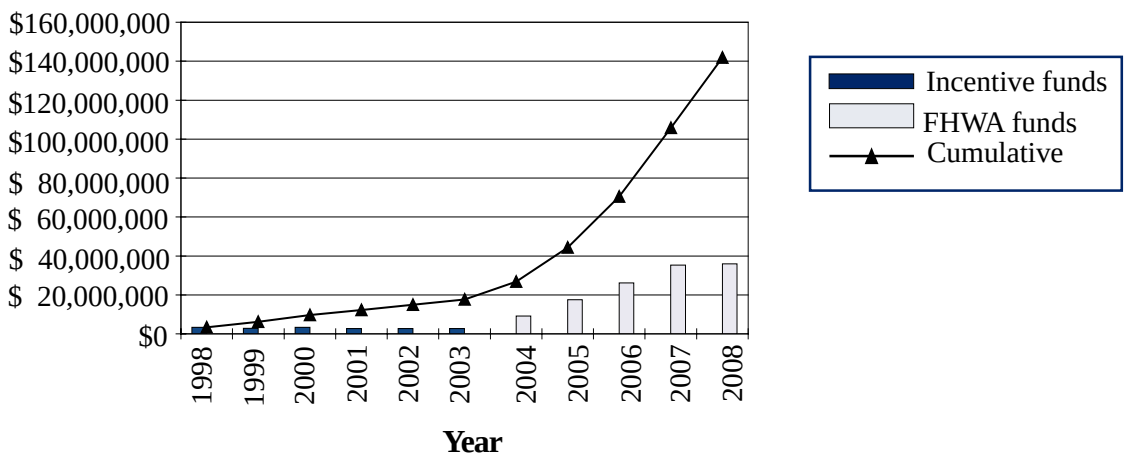
(Note: While the penalty is capped at 8% in 2007, estimates assume average rate of growth in funding, resulting in a higher figure for 2008 and beyond.)

In addition, since 1998, Wisconsin has lost eligibility to apply for approximately $15 million in incentive funds for states enacting .08 laws.

- Potential loss of highway funds (2004-2008): $124,100,000
- Incentive funds no longer eligible for (1998-2002): $ 14,990,601
- Incentive funds still eligible for (2003): $ 2,692,311
- Cumulative total potential loss of funds (1998-2008): **$141,782,912**

♦ ♦ ♦

Estimated cumulative effect of lost or withheld incentive and highway (FHWA) funds in WI due to 0.08 sanctions
Total amount involved = $141,782,912



TRAFFIC TEAMS: Safety enforcement for the community

As motorists become more willing to break the law, police agencies are becoming more creative in their efforts to crack down on these roadway menaces. And out of that creative effort comes the concept of the "traffic team." It's the kind of targeted enforcement which seems to be the only way to get *some* people to drive safely and legally.

Not your average "traffic cop"

The traffic team is focused on the ultimate traffic safety challenge for state troopers, county sheriff's deputies and local police: reducing crash fatalities and injuries. The team idea incorporates community-policing philosophies. As in the case of crime fighting, officers take a tactical approach to the problems of traffic safety. This means involving community members when targeting specific reckless and illegal driving behavior, as officers do when community-policing teams target crimes such as burglary or personal assaults.

But the traffic team approach means more than just enforcement. Officers work together with other people in their communities to help solve or alleviate traffic safety problems. They seek out advice about where problem intersections or stretches of highway may be, or what times of the day traffic violators are most likely to be found.

Traffic team officers are given the freedom to become "experts" in specific traffic problems such as speeding in neighborhoods, red light running, bike and pedestrian issues, and child passenger safety. They become champions for traffic safety and often speak to community groups on traffic safety topics. Most importantly, traffic team officers are dedicated to their jobs and highly motivated. Officers are specifically hired for traffic team enforcement duty and have to apply and compete for these choice assignments.

Brown County project

In the summer of 2001, the Brown County Sheriff's Department created a team with the help of partial funding from WisDOT's Bureau of Transportation Safety. The Brown County traffic team has two deputies (one of whom is a sergeant) and a patrol captain. Standard patrol deputies and patrol officers from other agencies often work together on the project. In its first month, the Brown County Traffic Team alone wrote 280 citations. Most were for speeding.

Madison's TEST

The City of Madison Police Department is another leader in the team approach. Madison's Traffic Enforcement Safety Team (TEST) began in June 1999 with six officers and a sergeant. It

expanded in 2000 to twelve officers, a lieutenant and two sergeants. During the first six months, TEST officers made nearly 7,000 traffic stops. The Madison community has embraced the concept and it's hoped that TEST will be a model for other Wisconsin law enforcement agencies.

Doing "the wave"

An effective strategy that traffic teams use is the "enforcement wave" - several officers from the same agency working together on the same problem roadway area. The large law enforcement presence alone can be a deterrent to violators. During a speed wave, for example, a motorist may see four, six or eight marked squad cars making traffic stops along one stretch of roadway. Unfortunately, officers often have to return to the same area more than once to get some people to slow down.

"Teams" continued on page 6

MODERN ROUNDABOUTS: Traffic safety by design

In the Dane County village of Mt. Horeb, where the traveler may encounter ancient trolls at any given street corner, something decidedly more modern is in the works. It's a project that will bring travelers literally full-circle. WisDOT and Mt. Horeb are building a "modern roundabout," a type of circular intersection that has tremendous potential for improving safety.

Mt. Horeb is replacing the signalized intersection at WIS 78/92. From 1993-1997 there were 22 crashes reported there, four with injuries. WisDOT estimates the roundabout could reduce those crashes by as much as 75%.

In Wisconsin Rapids, a modern roundabout will replace the intersection of WIS 54, Gaynor Avenue and 17th Avenue. Both projects are scheduled for construction in 2004.

A safer intersection

Safety statistics show the modern roundabout to be the safest form of at-grade intersection control available. It first appeared in Great Britain in the 1960s.

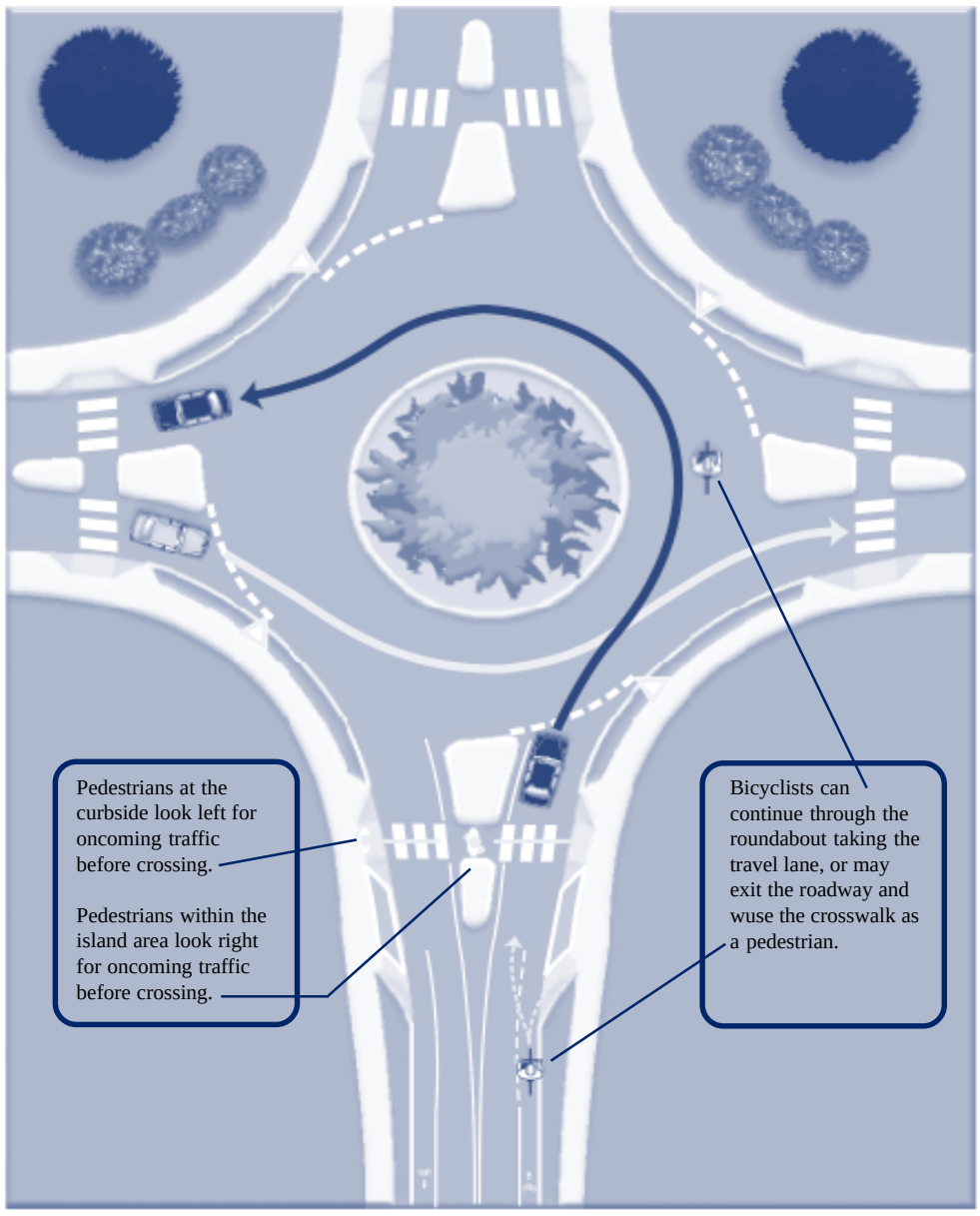
The first modern American roundabouts were built in 1990 in Summerlin, Nevada. Thousands of vehicles a day use the two roundabouts there, but only a handful of crashes have been reported. Roundabouts have since been built in California, Colorado, Florida, Kansas, Maryland, Michigan, New York, New Hampshire, Oregon, Texas, Vermont, Washington and of course, Wisconsin.

Reduced speed is a key difference from traditional intersections, where drivers are encouraged by a green or yellow light to accelerate and "beat the red light." Roundabouts act like a series of four "T" intersections with right-in and right-out turning movement. This eliminates dangerous left turns and means fewer chances of crashes.

Think pizza, not spaghetti

Currently, five single-lane entry roundabouts exist in Wisconsin: three in DePere and two in Howard. But they'll soon be joined by Milwaukee, where a modern roundabout is under construction at the south end of the new Sixth Street Bridge. It will be the first two-lane roundabout in the state and will replace a confusing intersection. As one traffic engineer put it, the roundabout will substitute "pizza for the spaghetti" and reduce the number of potential conflict points by 200%.

In Milwaukee, Mt. Horeb, and Wisconsin Rapids, safety, reduced congestion, and better traffic flow are cited as reasons for building the roundabouts.



Traffic within the roundabout always moves counter-clockwise (to the right). Look to the left for oncoming traffic and enter when there is sufficient space and time to do so. Automobiles within the roundabout have the right-of-way.

Roundabout, no doubt

The benefits of modern roundabouts are well known around the world. Yet many in Wisconsin worry that drivers won't safely adapt to them.

WisDOT engineer Mark Johnson says that kind of fear is common. "At first the public is reluctant to accept roundabouts. But after a well-designed roundabout is built, public acceptance surveys report as many as 90% approve of them." Johnson says people adapt very quickly because the driving skills are nearly identical to many other situations drivers experience on the roadway every day. "You often hear from drivers that after one or two trips through a roundabout intersection they feel as though it has always been there."

Indeed, as new modern roundabouts open to traffic around the state, Wisconsin motorists may eventually conquer their fear of the unknown, and come around to the fact that a *circle* just may be the safest distance between two points.

Roundabouts move traffic safely

The safety features of modern roundabouts include:

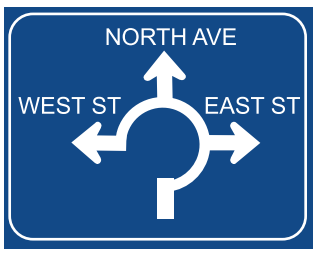
- "Yield at entry" - vehicles must yield to circulating traffic *within* the roundabout
- Traffic deflected to the right and slowed upon entry of the roundabout
- Splitter islands that provide vehicle guidance and safe pedestrian crossings
- Good sight distance, lighting and signage
- No crosswalks across the circulatory roadway
- Smaller diameter than old traffic circles
- No parking in the roundabout
- Circulating speeds of 15–20 miles per hour

Do you know the meaning of these roundabout signs?

A.

B.

C.



D.

E.

F.

G.

Match the sign to its meaning:

1. Warning, yield to pedestrians
2. Warning, yield to bicyclists
3. One way traffic in roundabout
4. Name of exit street
5. Yield to traffic, enter when safe
6. Roundabout exit streets
7. Slow down, yield ahead

Answers provided on page 6.

Know what's ahead... major work zones 2002

Eastern Wisconsin

1 I-43 from National Avenue to the Mitchell Interchange, 4.9 miles and from Lexington Boulevard to North Avenue, 3.5 miles, in Milwaukee County. Resurfacing, bridge repairs, and ramp improvements will require lane and ramp restrictions. April - October.

2 I-94 at WIS 26 at Johnson Creek, 2 miles. Interchange reconstruction will cause traffic lanes to shift periodically and reduce lane widths to 11 feet through the work zone. March - September.

3 I-94 eastbound rest area near Lake Mills. Closed for reconstruction. Through early November.

4 I-39/90/94 at US 151 and High Crossing Boulevard at Madison, 1 mile. Interchange reconstruction. Two lanes open in each direction on Interstate; shifting traffic lanes on US 151. Through December.

5 I-39/90/94 at County V near DeForest, 1.2 miles. Reconstruction of interchange may require single lane closures during off-peak travel hours. Through fall.

6 US 151 between WIS 26 and WIS 49 near Waupun, 3.7 miles. Roadway expansion and interchange improvements may require temporary roadways, reduced speeds, and uneven pavement. Through fall 2003.

7 WIS 57 between Ozaukee County A near Fredonia to Waldo in Sheboygan County, 14 miles. Reconstruction of highway will shift all traffic to one side of the median. Through October.

8 WIS 110 from US 41 to WIS 116, 5 miles, and WIS 110/WIS 150/County W Interchange. On WIS 110, traffic may be stopped periodically for equipment crossings; at WIS 110/WIS 150/County W interchange, WIS 110 will be closed. Northbound traffic will be allowed to continue on County W, but no access will be provided to WIS 110 or WIS 150. No through traffic from WIS 110 to WIS 150. Detour route via US 41, WIS 96, and US 10. Through November.

9 County D (future US 45) between Winnebago County W and New London, 12 miles. County D will be closed and detoured via WIS 96/US 10, US 45, and US 45/WIS 15. Through fall.

10 US 10 between US 41 and US 45 and the US 10/US 45 interchange, 6 miles. Construction will close US 10 between County CB and US 45. US 45 will be closed at the US 10 interchange. Detour via US 41 to WIS 15. Through November.

11 WIS 55 from US 41 to WIS 54, 15 miles. Road closed north of Freedom with detour via County S, County C, and WIS 54. Through October.

12 I-43 from Webster Street to US 41 in Green Bay, 5 miles. Resurfacing project with at least one lane open at all times, with two lanes open on Tower Avenue Bridge. All lanes open during holidays. Through mid-summer.

13 WIS 29 from V to WIS 42 in Kewaunee, 13.4 miles. Road repairs will require detour via Kewaunee County V and J. Through late September.

14 WIS 42 from Sister Bay to Northport, 12.5 miles. Resurfacing with flaggers controlling traffic. Through mid-July.

15 US 141 from Abrams to WIS 22, 5 miles. One lane open in each direction while roadway is reconstructed. Through October.

16 WIS 64 from west Oconto County line to WIS 32, 6.5 miles. Bridge and road work requires detour, which is posted. Through late fall.

17 I-39 from the north Columbia County line to just north of WIS 73, 50 miles. Three-mile segments will have lane closures to repair dowel bars in pavement. Through July.

18 I-39 from Portage County X to just south of WIS 34 in Marathon County, 10 miles. Single lane closures during weekdays prior to September 4. After Labor Day, all traffic will be reduced to one lane in each direction on one side of the median. Through mid-November.

19 WIS 23 from Montello to Princeton, 11 miles. Resurfacing will require lane closures with flaggers. Through July.

20 WIS 21 between Wautoma and Redgranite, 6 miles. Reconstruction will require detour via WIS 73, WIS 23 and WIS 49. Through November.

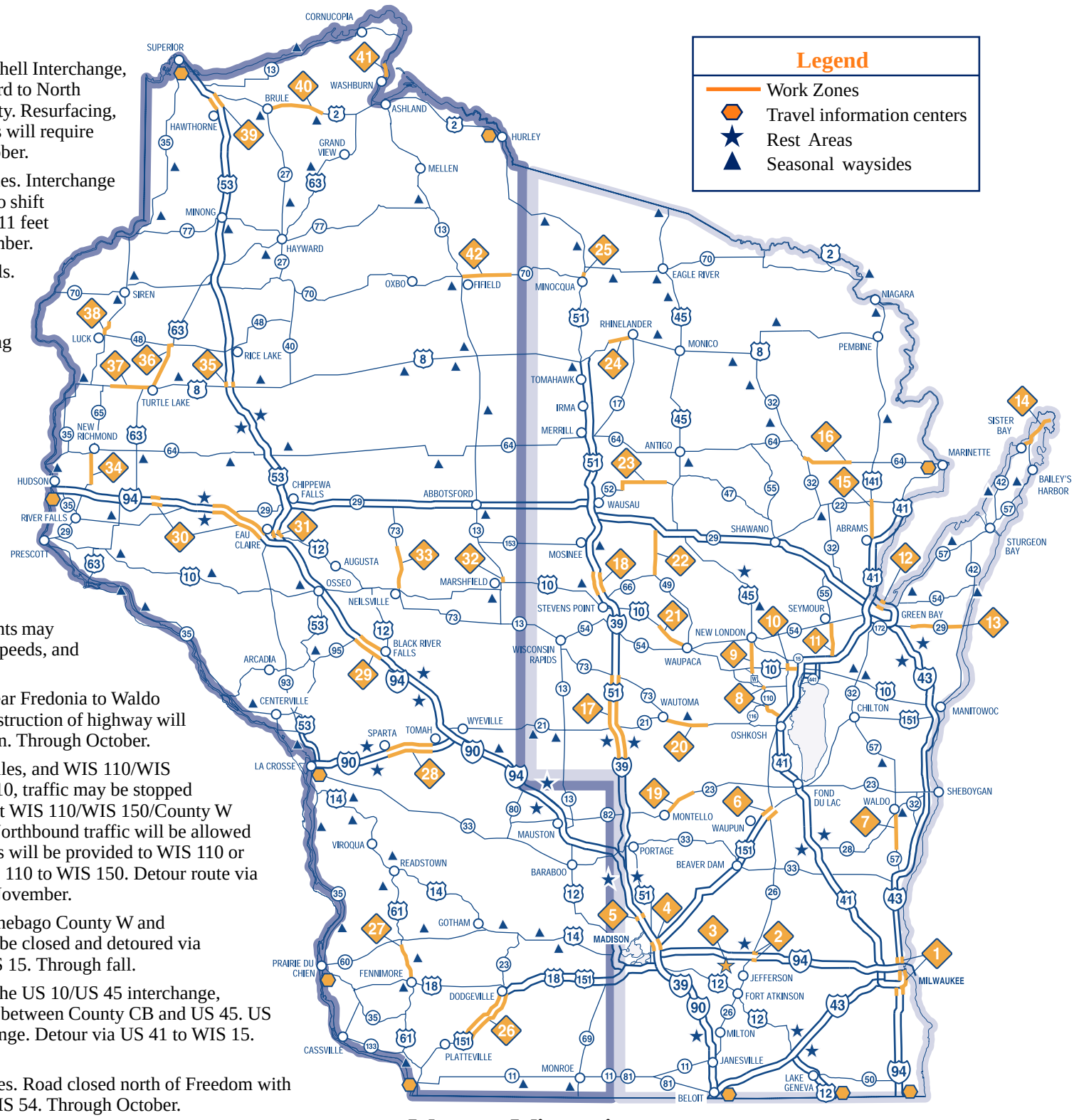
21 US 10 from Amherst to just west of Waupaca, 12.5 miles. Expansion of highway to four lanes will require periodic lane closures with flaggers. Through November.

22 WIS 49 from WIS 66 to WIS 29, 11 miles. Resurfacing and new guardrail installation will require single lane closures with flaggers. Through July.

23 WIS 52 from Marathon County J to the east county line, 13 miles. Road and bridge work will require detour via County J, Z, ZZ and US 45. Through October.

24 US 8 from North Rifle Road to WIS 47 in Rhinelander, 3 miles. Road work will be done under traffic. Through late fall.

25 US 51 from Front Street to WIS 47 in Minocqua, 1.5 miles. Repaving of roadway will be done under traffic. Through fall.



Western Wisconsin

26 US 151 from Belmont to Dodgeville, 16 miles. Conversion to four lanes will require occasional lane shifts, equipment crossings, and traffic stoppages. Through fall 2003.

27 US 61 from Fennimore to Boscobel, 10 miles. Reconstruction and bridge work will require detour via US 18 and WIS 133. Through fall.

28 I-90 between Sparta and Tomah, 10.2 miles. Resurfacing and bridge repair will require one lane of traffic in each direction on one side of the median. Through July.

29 I-94 from Hixton to Black River Falls, 10 miles. Resurfacing and bridge repair will require one lane of traffic in each direction on one side of the median. Through November. No work June through August.

30 I-94 from St. Croix County BB to WIS 128, 5.5 miles and from Menomonie to WIS 124 just west of Eau Claire, 15 miles. Repaving will require one lane of traffic in each direction. Through November.

31 US 53 in Eau Claire, 1 mile. Bridge replacement will cause lane restrictions. Through October.

32 WIS 13 from Central Avenue to McMillan Street in Marshfield, 2 miles. Reconstruction will require local detour, which is posted. Through September.

33 WIS 73 from Neillsville to Greenwood, 12.5 miles. Resurfacing will cause lane restrictions. Traffic will be detoured for two weeks during the project. Through October.

34 WIS 65 from US 12 to WIS 64 in New Richmond 10 miles. Expansion of highway to four lanes will require lane restrictions. Through October.

35 US 53 bridge at Barron County W near Cameron, 1 mile. Traffic reduced to one lane in each direction. Through fall.

36 US 63 from US 8 to Cumberland, 13.2 miles. Resurfacing will require flaggers, one lane in the work zone. Through fall.

37 US 8 between WIS 46 and 50th Street near Turtle Lake, 5 miles. Reconstruction of highway will require periodic lane closures with flaggers. Through November.

38 WIS 35 between Luck and Frederic, 6 miles. Traffic reduced to one lane with flaggers. Through fall.

39 US 53 from US 2 to Hawthorne, 6.1 miles. Resurfacing will reduce traffic to one lane in each direction. Through fall.

40 US 2 from Brule to Ino, 18 miles. Road work will require lane restrictions, flaggers in some areas. Through November.

41 WIS 13 bridges over Sioux River north of Washburn, 1 mile. Traffic is reduced to one lane in each direction controlled by a traffic signal. Through summer.

42 WIS 70 from WIS 13 at Fifield to the east Price County line, 19 miles. Road work will require lane restrictions. Through late fall.

REALLY
Give'em a BRAKE

SPEEDING IN WISCONSIN: Racing to danger

In Wisconsin last year, speeders on our highways helped set a dubious record. The Division of Motor Vehicles reports the most speeding citations ever recorded in one year — more than 306,000 were entered into driver records during 2001.

It confirms what many of us have already observed on the roads. More and more people are in the habit of breaking speed laws on a regular basis. And more people are getting caught.

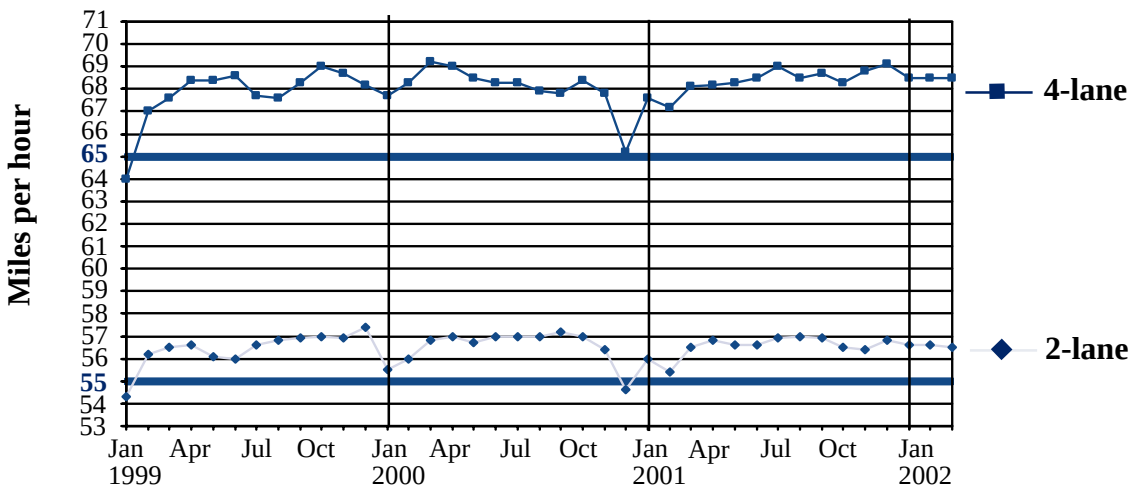
But the price of a speeding habit is more than just a few dollars from your wallet and a few points on your record. Speeding deaths are on the upswing in recent years. And speeding is causing thousands of crashes each year. In Wisconsin in 2001, there were 18,089 speed-related crashes and nearly 11,000 injuries associated with those crashes. Speeding killed 248 people in 2001, a more than 7% increase from 2000.

Speeding means going faster than the posted speed limit. It also means going faster than driving conditions (such as driving at night, in the rain, fog, snow, or ice) would dictate. But speeding really means taking a big chance with your life, your passengers and those on the street and in vehicles around you.

High-speed winters

Speeds on rural highways in Wisconsin typically go down significantly during the winter season. But during this past mild winter we never got the downward spike we normally see. It's cause for alarm when speeds are nearly as high in the middle of winter as they are in summer. It's a partial explanation for the higher than normal traffic fatalities in January and February of 2002.

Average speed on rural 2-lane and 4-lane highways (January 1999-March 2002)



Source: WisDOT Automatic Traffic Recorder Stations. Speed data is collected by automatic traffic recorders at 24 locations on rural 4-lane highways and 28 locations on rural 2-lane highways. These recorders operate 24 hours a day.

Mid-winter/early-spring speeds are the "platform" from which spring/summer speeds rise. If the "bottom" is higher, then speeds could be higher than normal this summer and fall. A troubling statistic is that 35 out of every 1,000 drivers chose to exceed 80 mph in the middle of winter on Wisconsin's 4-lane highways.

What speeding means for the driver

- √ Less time to react
- √ Longer stopping distance once you've hit the brakes
- √ More difficulty maneuvering around curves or unexpected objects
- √ A rapid collision course with vehicles or objects ahead
- √ A harder impact against the steering wheel, dashboard or windshield

Some motorists think that speeding will get them where they're going a lot faster. But the time saved is less than you may think. For example, a motorist traveling 10 mph over the speed limit for a stretch of ten freeway miles (65 mph in a 55 mph zone) will shave less than two minutes off the trip. In the meantime, the chance of getting killed in a crash goes up tremendously.

The young and the reckless

Teenage drivers make up only 6% of all licensed drivers in Wisconsin, yet they account for 15% of all drivers in crashes. These 16-19 year olds are more likely than other drivers to be involved in speed-related crashes, young males most of all. According to crash reports, this has been true every year since 1996. Wisconsin teens in great numbers are involved in another high-risk behavior: not wearing their seat belts. Speed and alcohol have also become a particularly deadly combination. Drivers involved in alcohol-related crashes were often speeding, too.

Why do people continue to speed? Partly because they're in a hurry. But mainly for the same reason people take all sorts of other chances. Because they think bad things like crashes happen to other people, not them. So they go on speeding.

Ironically, when people are surveyed about what they think it will take to break them of their speeding habit, the number one response is: increased enforcement and ticketing. So, it seems until drivers finally get the message one way or another, and stay within the speed limit, Wisconsin motorists will continue to break both the law and speeding citation records along the way. ♦ ♦ ♦

BOOSTER SEATS: Not kid stuff

"You wouldn't make your kids wear your clothes .. so why do you think your seat belt will fit them?"

That simple statement sums up the important fact that although your child may have graduated from a car seat, he or she may not yet be ready for an adult *seat belt*. A booster seat is the safe in-between step. It's also the safest way to keep your child from being injured in a crash.

Adult seat belts are designed for adult bodies. During a crash, the adult belt can damage a child's intestines, chest, liver, spleen spinal cord and head. But an alarming 75% of kids who should be using a booster seat, don't.

Booster seats are designed to protect children during the time when they're too big for a child safety seat but too small for a grown-up seat belt. Children who need a booster seat generally range in age from about 4 to at least 8 years old. Experts agree that if your child is over 40 lbs. but under 80 lbs., and less than 4' 9" tall, he or she should be sitting in a booster seat. But that's just a general range and children can vary greatly. If your child is NOT riding in a booster seat, try this simple test:

The 5-step test

1. Does your child sit all the way back against the auto seat?
2. Do your child's knees bend comfortably at the edge of the seat?
3. Does the seat belt cross the shoulder between your child's neck and arm?
4. Is the lap belt as low as possible, touching the thighs?
5. Can the child stay seated like this for the whole trip?

If you answered "no" to any of these questions, your child needs a booster seat to ride safely in the car. Don't take any chances. A booster seat could mean the difference between life and death for your child. ♦ ♦ ♦

Safety conference navigates change

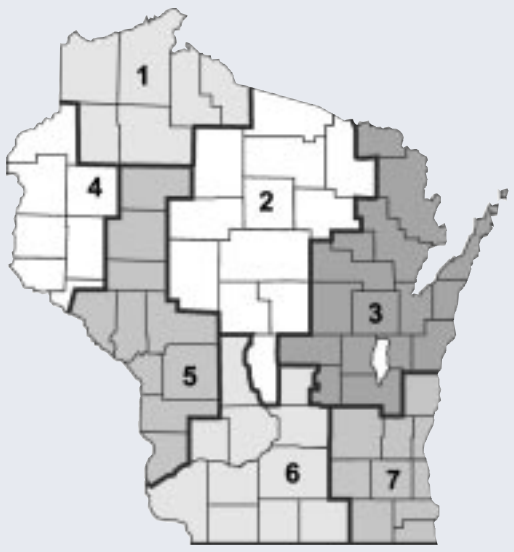
The 28th Annual Governor's Conference on Highway Safety is scheduled for June 27 & 28 at the Radisson Paper Valley Hotel and Conference Center in Appleton. This year's theme, "Navigating Change," puts the focus on new and emerging traffic safety issues. WisDOT's Bureau of Transportation Safety sponsors the two-day program, bringing together safety partners from across Wisconsin: law enforcement, emergency medical personal and health providers, educators, transportation professionals and others. The conference will feature workshops on successful seat belt programs, impaired driving strategies, speeding enforcement, challenges for elderly and disabled drivers, the latest on bike/ped issues and crash and citation location technology among other sessions. ♦ ♦ ♦

Milwaukee area tops in seat belt use

The latest observational survey of seat belt use in Wisconsin shows 68.7% of passenger vehicle occupants used their seatbelts in 2001.

Belt use varies by more than 10% across the state. The Milwaukee area is highest at 72.1%, and the Hudson/Western WI area is lowest at 59.4%.

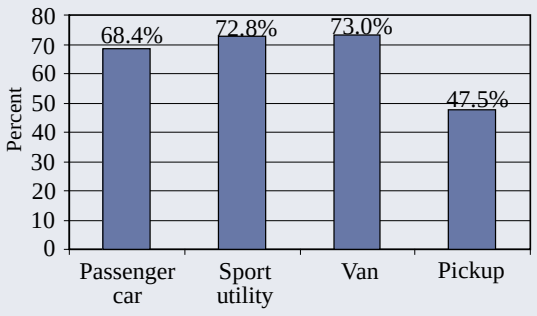
Region		Belt usage 2001 (%)
1	Superior/Northern WI	62.5
2	Wausau/Rhinelander	63.8
3	Green Bay/Appleton	70.0
4	Hudson/Western WI	59.4
5	La Crosse/Eau Claire	66.9
6	Madison	67.6
7	Milwaukee	72.1



Occupants of vans were most likely to be wearing their seatbelts. Some 73% of van occupants wore safety belts.

Occupants of pickup trucks were least likely to use their belts. Fewer than half (47.5%) of the occupants of pickup trucks wore safety belts.

Belt use by vehicle type



State Patrol, DMV study cell phone use

Wisconsin State Patrol troopers have begun keeping track of cell phone use in traffic crashes. As part of a six month study which began on May 1, troopers are required to note on the accident report whether a cell phone was in use at the time of a crash, whether a cell phone was in use but was not a factor, or whether a cell phone was in use and was a factor in the crash. Troopers will also note whether a cell phone was hand-held or hands-free.

The study will run through October 31, 2002, after which the Division of Motor Vehicles will compile the results. The final report, due in April 2003, will help identify any patterns of motorist cell phone use in relation to traffic crashes and recommend possible actions to help mitigate the effects of cell phone use on motorist behavior. The survey is being undertaken at the request of the legislature, which is considering several bills relating to cell phone use by motorists.

♦ ♦ ♦

"Seat belts" continued from page 1

In Louisiana, seat belt use jumped 13 percentage points in the first year after they enacted their law - from 70% to 83%. Eighteen states, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia have primary enforcement seat belt laws.

Be your own flight attendant

So, why should you buckle up? Look at it this way: driving is many times more hazardous on average than flying. Yet, as anyone who's flown on a commercial airliner knows, the captain will not even back the plane away from the gate, let alone take off, until everyone on board is buckled up. Should it be any different when your motor vehicle gets ready to roll down the driveway or the highway? Be your own flight attendant, and make sure that not only your passengers, but also that you yourself fasten your seat belt before your departure. Even if it's just a short hop down the block and back.

♦ ♦ ♦

"Traffic teams" continued from page 2

Sometimes several different agencies within a county or specific geographic region team up on enforcement waves, putting even more personnel on the road and greatly increasing the traffic violator's chances of getting pulled over. The Wisconsin State Patrol also joins local agencies during the enforcement waves, when possible. The collaboration between all types of agencies helps send the message that law enforcement officers take speeding seriously and are actively doing something about it together.

These strategies and tactics present a clear choice for the motorist. When you're behind the wheel, you can side with the traffic enforcers or the lawbreakers. Whose team will *you* choose?

♦ ♦ ♦

Roundabout sign quiz answers from page 3.

A-1. Watch for pedestrians as you enter & exit the roundabout.
B-5. Yield to traffic, enter when safe. Slow down.
C-6. Roundabout exit streets, look for your destination.
D-4. Name of exit street. Exit to your destination.
E-3. One way traffic in roundabout, keep your speed low.
F-2. Watch for bicyclists
G-7. Slow down, yield ahead. Move to correct lane for the lane you wish to travel.

Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Office of Public Affairs
c/o ***WisDOT Connector***
P.O. Box 7910
Madison, WI 53707-7910

Madison
WIS.
PRESORTED
STANDARD
US POSTAGE PAID
MADISON WI
PERMIT NO 2235

How to contact us

The ***WisDOT Connector*** is a quarterly publication of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. It is intended to inform the public about key transportation issues and how they affect Transportation in Wisconsin.

Thomas E. Carlsen, P.E., Acting Secretary
Linda Thelke, Director, Office of Public Affairs

Editor/designer: Dawn Espie

Thanks to our many private and public partners for their contributions towards this issue. Comments and questions about this issue can be directed to Jim Condelles at:

Phone: **608.266.3581**
Fax: 608.266.7186
E-mail: opa.exec@dot.state.wi.us
Web: www.dot.state.wi.us

Or by mail at:
Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Office of Public Affairs
P.O. Box 7910
Madison, WI 53707-7910